

Targeted harassment of engineering education researchers:

How to connect with community and support your colleagues under attack

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Who are we?



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Who's in the "room?"

Please put your answer in the question box.

1. Where in the world are you working?
2. Are you faculty/administrators/program staff, or something else (tell us!)

What do you hope to learn today?

Please put your answer in the question box.

What is “targeted harassment?”

How would you define it?

30 seconds think on your own; put ideas in the question box.

What is “targeted harassment?”

Often virtual (phone, email, social media)

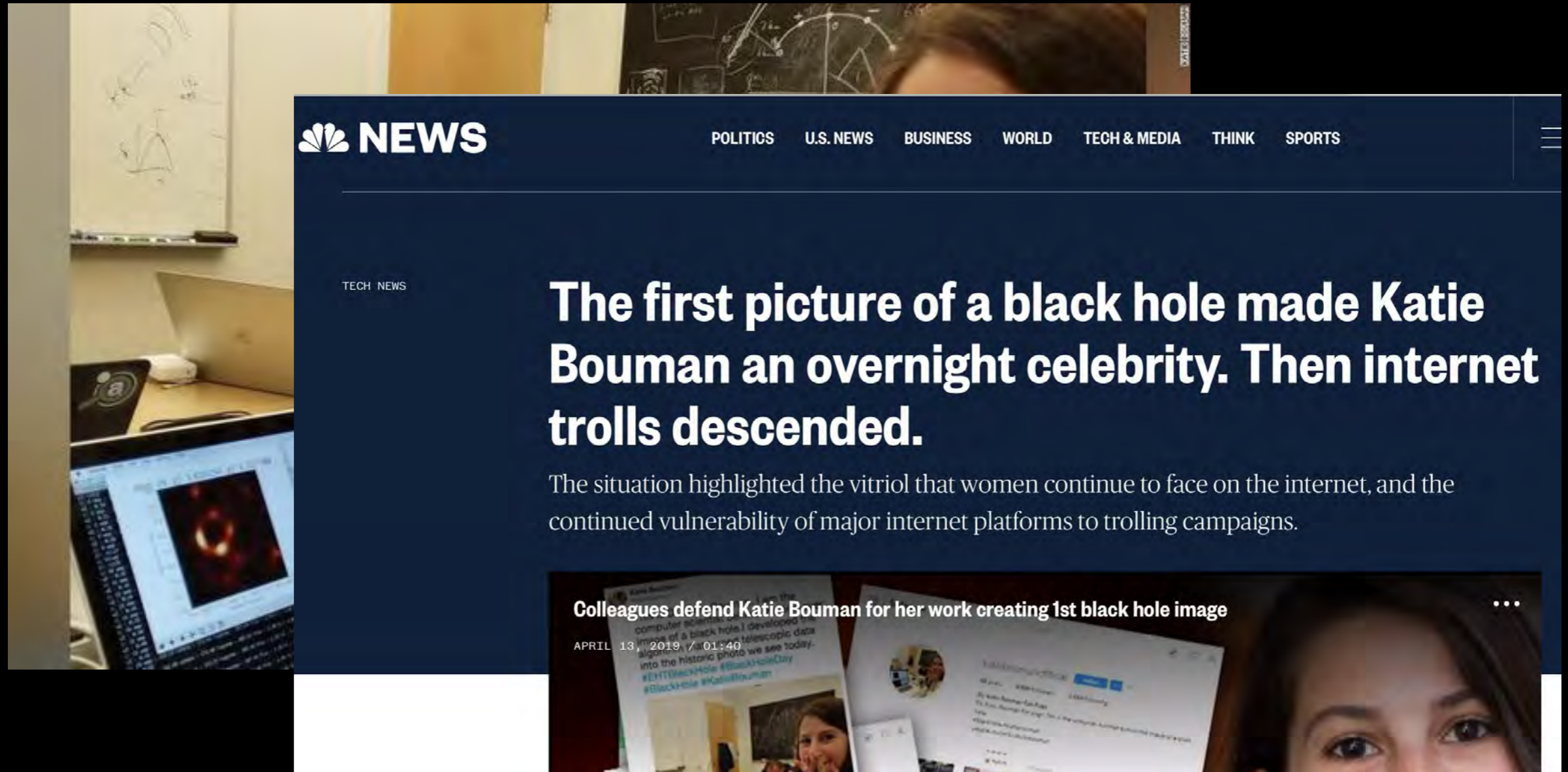
Personal

Threatening violence

Expressing misogyny, homophobia, or racism

Coordinated and repeated

What does it look like?



Andrew Chael's response: <http://bit.ly/2KSfvct>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/tech-news/first-picture-black-hole-made-katie-bouman-overnight-celebrity-then-n994081>

What does it look like in academia?

- Focused on people's scholarship as unworthy
- Often related to scholars' efforts to raise questions about long-held privileges that threaten the status quo
- Threatening academic freedom
- AAUP reports incidences from both sides of political spectrum, and overwhelmingly from the political right.*



* AAUP Facebook Live with Henry Reichman and Joan Wallach Scott, accessed Jan 25, 2019

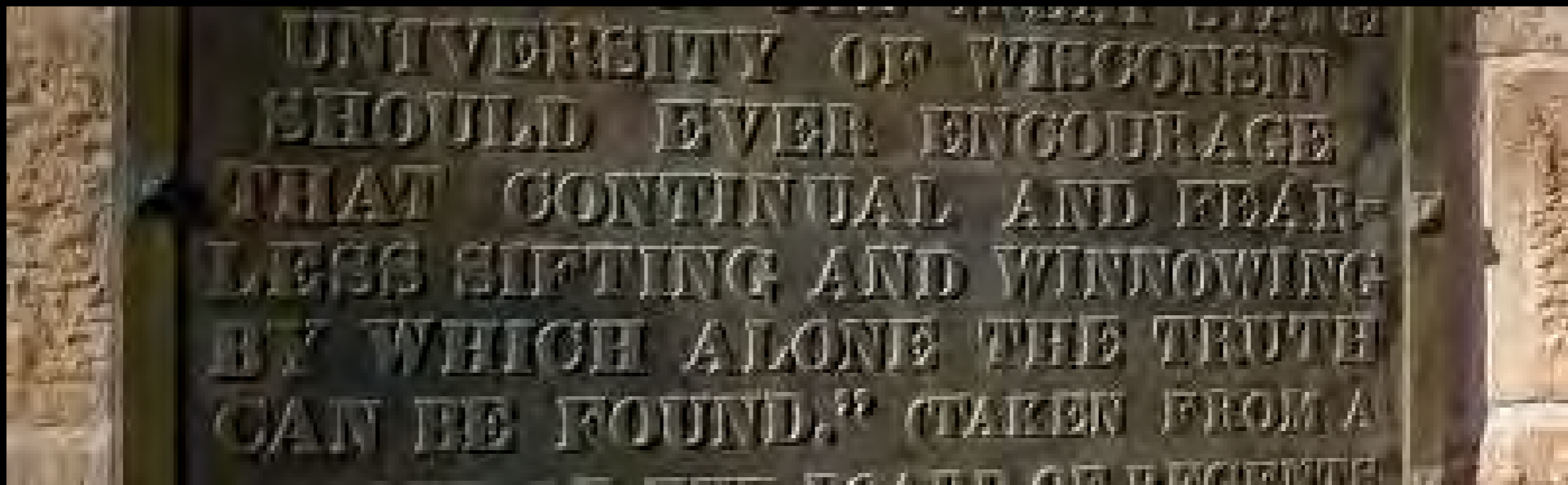
<https://www.facebook.com/AAUPNational/videos/1819187414781402/>

So what?
Snowflakes?

So what?

Threats to academic freedom, to the credibility of academia, and to the notion of a public good*

* AAUP Facebook Live with Henry Reichman and Joan Wallach Scott, accessed Jan 25, 2019 <https://www.facebook.com/AAUPNational/videos/1819187414781402/>



“...continual and fearless sifting and winnowing...”

How are academic freedom and freedom of speech different?

academic freedom - a protection of faculty rights based on disciplinary competence

freedom of speech - the right to express one's ideas, however true or false they may be.

“Academic freedom defends the pursuit of knowledge, wherever it leads. The pursuit of knowledge is not an elitist activity but a practice vital for the exercise of democracy and the promotion of the common good. Those values— knowledge, democracy, and the common good—must be reasserted in defense of the university and against the anti-intellectualism of the Trump administration.” (Scott, 2017)*

* “On Free Speech and Academic Freedom,” by Joan W. Scott, *Journal of Academic Freedom* vol 8. https://www.aaup.org/sites/default/files/Scott_0.pdf

How has community responded?

- Conversations at CoNECD 2018, ASEE 2018, CoNECD 2019, ASEE 2019
- Articles in PEER database, RSR model disseminated
- Riley, Donna (2019) “Pipelines, Persistence, and Perfidy: Institutional Unknowing and Betrayal Trauma in Engineering.” *Feminist Formations*, 31(1) 1-19.
- ASEE Diversity Committee continues to send letters of support for faculty who have been targeted
- Database and network of EER people who have been the subject of targeted harassment
- People who attend sessions create plans to put into effect at their institutions (as you will be invited to do :-)

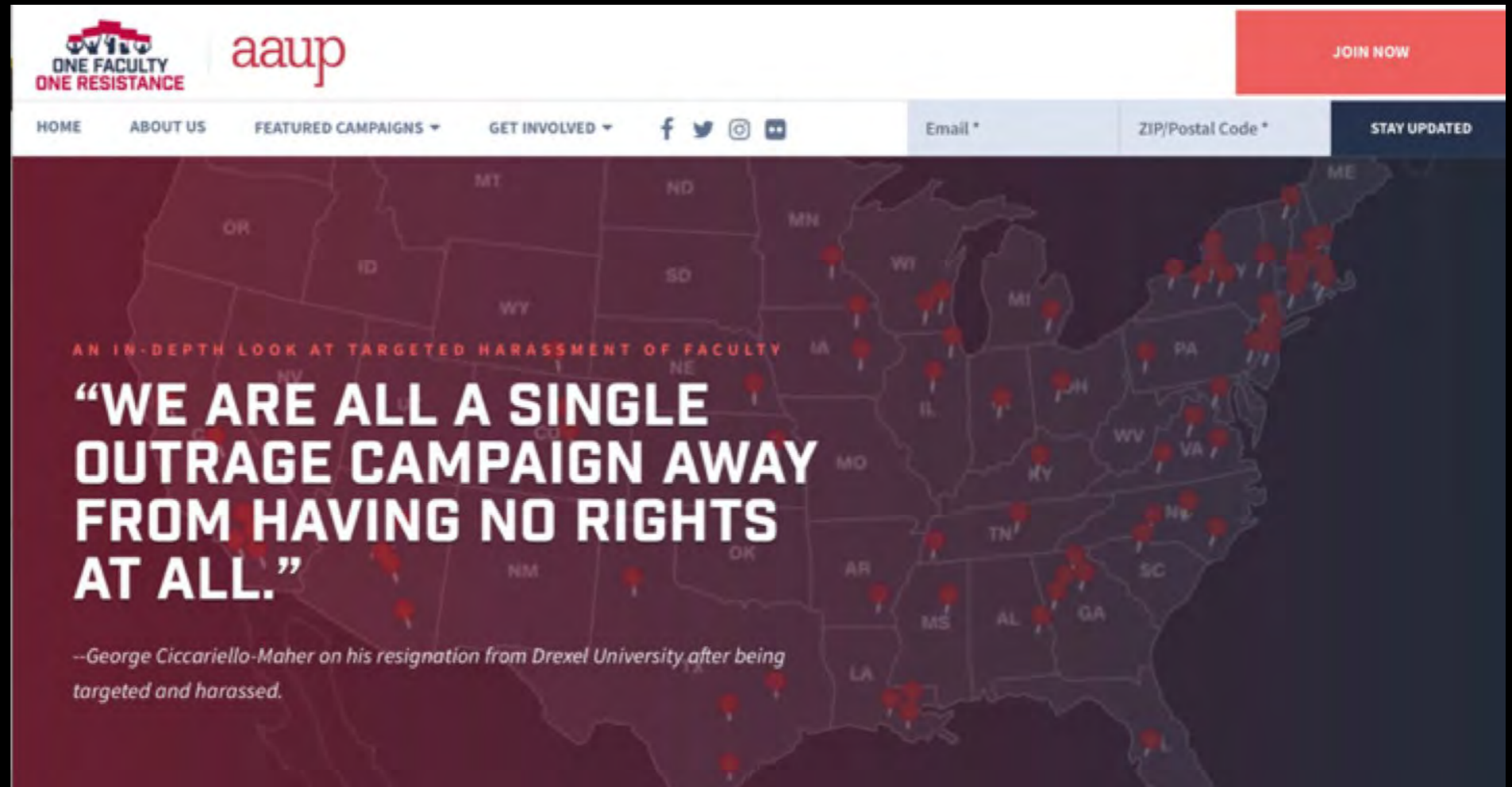
A model of how to respond:

Report

Support

Recommit

Report



- Unit, college, university levels
- Law enforcement: campus, local, state (state investigation unit), federal (FBI, Office of Civil Rights)
- Non-profits: SPLC, AAUP, AAC&U
- Other online harassment support orgs: Heart Mob, Troll Busters, Crash Override, Online SOS

Support

- Physical and emotional safety of the target
- AAUP chapters – engage impartial observers in meetings with administrators
- ASEE Diversity Committee – sending indicators of support to target’s supervisors, P&T committees, etc.
- Review other suggested plans and resources listed on handout
- Connect the target with us!

Recommit

- University media emphasize value of the researcher and their expertise to the institution, research community
- Units name what happened, and recommit publicly to principles of academic freedom
 - Faculty senate
 - Might need to be independent from university communications
- Ex: ASEE statement published March 13, 2018

March 13, 2018

Over the past year, there has been a proliferation of targeted attacks on scholarly work addressing diversity and inclusion in STEM education, including work in engineering education specifically. Many of these attacks have appeared on conservative outlets and in broader alt-right media and social media networks. When specific faculty members are targeted, they and their colleagues are often subject to harassing and threatening calls, emails, tweets, and more.

Such attacks serve to undermine academic freedom. The principle of academic freedom is grounded in the professional status and expertise of faculty. More than mere tolerance of

Our goal

- Create a culture where we support people who are targeted
 - Amplify single acts across institutions - not just “What **I** do” but “What **we** do”

“Transdisciplinary Research on Incivility in STEM Contexts”

October 17-18, 2019

University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign

Opportunities to join convo on Slack, listserv as well as in person

<https://incivility.beckman.illinois.edu>

Questions?

Then we're going to have you make a plan.

Make a plan now, so we align our actions!

Google Form (http://bit.ly/2019_WEPLAN_TH):

1. Who do you know who might be targeted?
2. What people should be prepared to support them, and in what ways?
3. What SOPs can you develop around communication and physical safety?
 - How can you help connect them to us?
4. What step will you commit to taking before next term?
5. How can we help hold you accountable to this commitment?

Thank you for attending!

Pass on the word about targeted harassment



How is targeted harassment different than academic “mobbing?”

- Can share characteristics but...
- Online vs in person
- Strangers vs people in a department
- Different ultimate goals (stop research vs kick out of department)